

A black and white photograph of a large, historic building with multiple stories, many windows, and a series of arches along the ground floor. The building is the main subject of the background.

IN THE SERVICE *of* SOCIETY

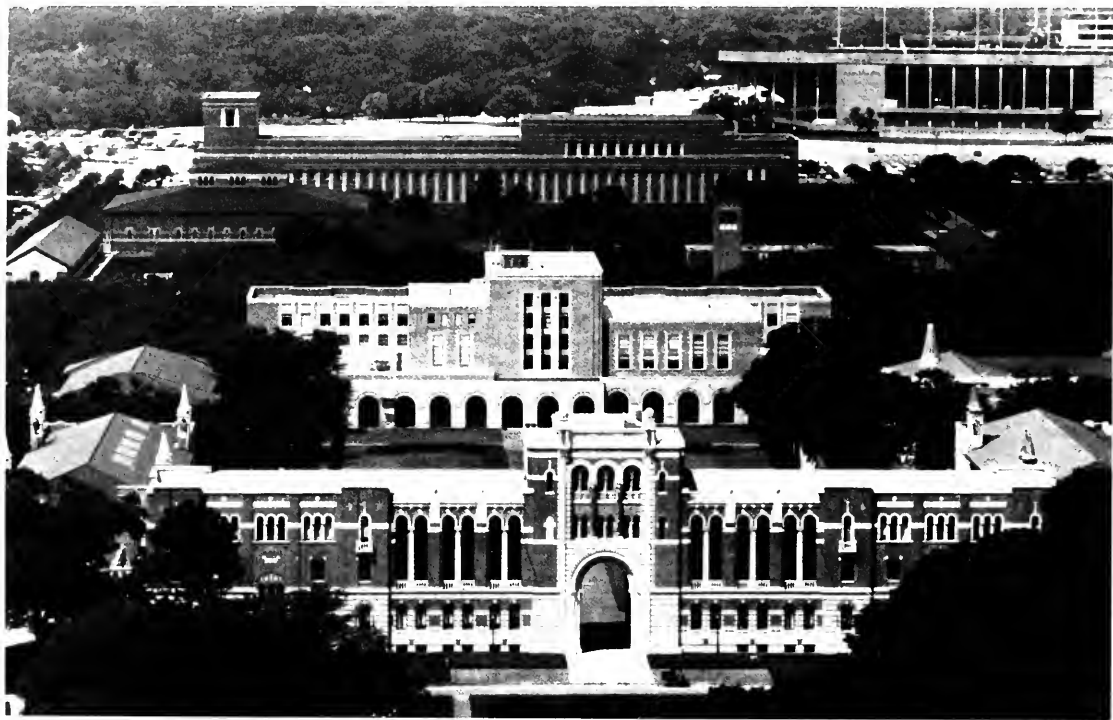
CONTINUING STUDIES AT RICE
1968-1998



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CONTINUING STUDIES AT RICE, 1968-1998

BY MELISSA KEAN



IN THE SERVICE OF SOCIETY

A University in Contact with the Community

When Rice University's first president, Edgar Odell Lovett, announced at the school's 1912 opening his bold vision for the future of the fledgling institute, he articulated a plan that must have seemed outlandish to many. Aiming to create a university that would ultimately compete with the best in the world, he had an ambition for undisputed academic excellence at Rice that was truly breathtaking.

One important aspect of Lovett's blueprint for the new school, as outlined in his *Book of the Opening*, was sustained contact between the institute and its surrounding community by means of a regular se-

ries of public lectures. This series would be designed to allow the faculty to offer their neighbors in Houston the best that they had to give—their learning. Lovett envi-

art, philosophy and politics, subjects will be chosen of current interest as well as those of assured and permanent value."

The lecture series for the Houston

"FROM THE DOMAINS OF LITERATURE, HISTORY, SCIENCE, ART, PHILOSOPHY AND POLITICS, SUBJECTS WILL BE CHOSEN OF CURRENT INTEREST AS WELL AS THOSE OF ASSURED AND PERMANENT VALUE."

— RICE UNIVERSITY PRESIDENT EDGAR ODELL LOVETT, 1912

sioned these lectures as "authoritative in character, but as non-technical and popular in treatment as their subjects permit. From the domains of literature, history, science,

community that Lovett outlined began with great fanfare, as talks on a variety of subjects drew large crowds to the campus. Soon, however, the Rice administration and faculty,

A WINDOW ON THE WORLD

World affairs have from time to time influenced the programs and events at Continuing Studies.

• IN 1991, A SECTION OF THE BERLIN WALL, DONATED BY THE HOUSTON FIRM OF BROWNING-FERRIS, WAS PLACED IN THE COURTYARD NEXT TO THE CONTINUING STUDIES CENTER AS A SYMBOL OF FREEDOM FROM OPPRESSION.

• THE MANAGER OF THE 1992 REPUBLICAN NATIONAL CONVENTION, HELD IN HOUSTON, CAME FROM WASHINGTON TO SPEAK IN A COURSE TITLED "ANYTHING BUT CONVENTIONAL."

• WHEN NASA PREPARED TO SEND AN ASTRONAUT CREW INTO SPACE TO LINK UP WITH THE RUSSIAN MIR SPACE STATION, IT CALLED ON RICE CONTINUING STUDIES TO TRAIN THE CREW AND HUNDREDS OF OTHER NASA EMPLOYEES ON UNDERSTANDING RUSSIAN CULTURE.



The course "Summit 101," as it was dubbed in a news article, drew more than 200 persons who wanted to know more about the 1990 Economic Summit of Industrialized Nations held at Rice University.

• THE LANGUAGE PROGRAMS ONCE DESIGNED COURSES FOR THE WIVES OF A GROUP OF SAUDI ARABIAN ACCOUNTANTS. THE CURRICULUM INCLUDED INTRODUCTION TO U.S. CULTURE, COOKING, AND SHOPPING AT THE GALLERIA.

• AS CHINA OPENED ITS DOORS TO THE WEST, CONTINUING STUDIES KEPT PARTICIPANTS INFORMED. IN 1979, IT OFFERED COURSES ON TRADE WITH CHINA AND LATER, ON THE MANY CHANGES THAT TOOK PLACE IN THE 1980S AND '90S.

• IN 1997, WHEN NASA ANNOUNCED FINDINGS THAT INDICATED LIFE MIGHT EXIST ON MARS, NASA SCIENTIST AND RICE ALUMNUS DAVID MCKAY WAS AMONG SEVERAL INTERNATIONALLY KNOWN SPEAKERS IN A COURSE ON "THE ORIGIN OF LIFE: EARTH, MARS, AND BEYOND."

caught up in the more immediate press of building the degree-granting portions of the school, turned their attention elsewhere. Public lectures continued on a sporadic basis, and short series of courses were sometimes offered, but Lovett's overarching vision of a great university in constant contact and dialogue with its community faded. Rice's reputation for insularity seemed to grow as its high reputation for scholarly excellence increased. In truth, although there were major exceptions, Rice did have a tendency to remain isolated "behind the hedges."

ACADEMIC JEWEL

The idea of creating a formal organization to promote and plan programs for the outside community took root only in the late 1960s.

NEW RESEARCH

Rice had for years been seen by many Houston residents as an "academic jewel," though a rather intimidating one. By the late 1960s, the notion of a university as a place set apart, an institution where scholars wrote and taught, secluded from the daily life of the society that surrounded them, was simply no longer tenable. Throughout the nation, colleges and universities were pulled into new relationships with their communities as they educated increasing numbers of students and produced more research that was used by industry, medicine, and government to improve the lives of citizens.

At Rice too, the research interests of the faculty began to move the

school toward greater involvement with the world beyond the campus as work in computing, space science, and other areas expanded. On the cornerstone of one of the first buildings at Rice was the phrase "science in the service of society," and that now was seen as a significant responsibility of the university. Rice also found itself in greater competition with Texas state universities—which had improved markedly since the end of World War II—for the region's best students and faculty.

In this atmosphere of the increasing strength and relevance of universities to the life of the nation, Rice seized an important opportunity to forge closer ties to its own community.



Instructor Kristin Flanagan with international students in the English as a Second Language Program.

A BRIDGE TO THE COMMUNITY, 1967-1973

On December 5, 1967, Rice president Kenneth S. Pitzer announced the establishment of the Office of Continuing Studies (OCS), to be directed by electrical engineering professor Carl Wischmeyer. The new office was given the mandate to begin bridging the gulf between the university and its Houston neighbors by offering useful continuing education of an academic caliber befitting Rice University.

Noting an increasing need among area professionals for opportunities to "learn of recent advances in knowledge and application methods in their fields," President Pitzer outlined the general thinking behind Rice's plans

to provide such opportunities. "Although much planning remains to be done," he wrote, "it might be anticipated that this program . . . will be self-supporting and will probably offer courses of one or two weeks duration. Instructors will be obtained from the Rice faculty, other universities, and from industrial organizations. Emphasis will be given to engineering and other fields of interest to Rice alumni, but the courses will be open to all qualified applicants."

These ideas and concerns articulated in President Pitzer's original announcement have shaped the course of Continuing Studies at Rice throughout its history.

A CHANGING CITY

The story of Continuing Studies at Rice is a story about growth and change, about diversification, and about an institution and a city that have changed in fundamental ways in the last 30 years.

From its inception, Continuing Studies was intended to address problems of change. Born at a time when the pace of transformation seemed newly troubling, the program was designed to help give people the tools to deal with problems of increasingly rapid change. To a very great extent, Continuing Studies still serves this purpose to-

WISCHMEYER STRESSED THAT THE PROGRAM WOULD BE "DESIGNED PRIMARILY TO BRIDGE THE WIDENING GAP BETWEEN FORMAL EDUCATION AND THE SWIFT CHANGES IN BASIC KNOWLEDGE" AND WOULD BECOME "A POTENTIALLY STRONG FORCE IN THE ANTI-OBSOLESCENCE BATTLE."

day, although often in ways that its founders could not have anticipated.

The evolution of Continuing Studies and its functions has been shaped by four major factors that have interacted with one another and with the larger social and economic forces at work in Houston. First and most important was its mission to spur the growth of closer ties between the university and its wider community by serving the needs of the public. Second was the desire to use Rice's resources in a

way that was appropriate to a university of high academic quality and stature. Third was the insistence on the part of the university's administration that Continuing Studies pay its own way, using its revenues to offset all of its expenses. The fourth factor was Continuing Studies' commitment to help Houstonians deal with an era of rapid change through specific course offerings.

All these factors played a major part in the development of an office

that was closely in tune with the changing composition and needs of the vibrant city that surrounds Rice University.

In spite of the ambitious goals for the program, OCS began its life with rather modest resources. Its initial funding consisted of a \$1,000 loan from the university, to be repaid at the end of the fiscal year. It was housed in a room in the Abercrombie Engineering Laboratory, staffed with the part-time director and a secretary.

SPREADING THE WORD

Wischmeyer began the work of building the program by spreading the word about Rice's new program within the Houston community. In articles that clarified and expanded on Pitzer's original announcement,

Wischmeyer stressed that the program would be "designed primarily to bridge the widening gap between formal education and the swift changes in basic knowledge" and would become "a potentially strong force in the anti-obsolescence battle."

Wischmeyer also began to provide more concrete details about how this goal might be accomplished. The first step was to identify areas in which rapid technological and scientific progress was making it difficult for even recent graduates to keep up by self-study alone. The second step was to correlate such areas with the teaching and research capabilities of interested Rice faculty members, who would then design intensive technical short courses centered on these specific problems.

Wischmeyer anticipated that such

courses would probably begin at the close of the regular school year, in May or June 1968, with the modest goal of offering one or two classes that first year. Scheduling during the summer, he believed, would allow for the greatest access to the physical facilities of the university, including housing for enrollees from other parts of the country, while avoiding competition for the energies of the participating faculty.

OFF-CAMPUS CONTACT

The new director also expressed concern about community relations, insisting that decisions about future offerings be made with a great deal of input from affected groups from outside the university, such as research sponsors and others in industry who were faced with problems

caused by swift technological change. OCS, he explained, "intends to develop easy communication with our friends off-campus, to maintain an accurate sensitivity to their needs, and to endeavor to react in effective and rewarding ways."

While there was some suggestion early on that the main target audience for this program would be Rice graduates, the vision of the commu-

Formation of the Office of Continuing Studies was announced in 1967.





HISTORIAN AND
ARCHAEOLOGIST WILLIAM
NEIDINGER
TAUGHT FOR
MANY YEARS FOR
CONTINUING STUDIES
WHEN HE WASN'T ON
ARCHAEOLOGICAL DIGS.
HE TOLD THE STORY OF
ARRIVING AT A BASE CAMP
IN NEPAL LATE ONE NIGHT:
WHEN HE WALKED TO-
WARD THE LIGHT OF THE
CAMPFIRE, A VOICE SAID,
"DIDN'T I TAKE A RICE
CONTINUING STUDIES
COURSE FROM YOU?"

nity to be served almost immediately became much more expansive.

NATIONAL VISION

Although the participation of Rice alumni was seen as critical to the growth and acceptance of the program, the courses were to be of such high academic quality that a national pool of applicants could be anticipated. Further, by as early as March 1968, President Pirzer noted that although the science and engineering fields were the most obvious places to begin a program designed to combat "professional obsolescence," the humanities were also undergoing tremendous changes, and that courses designed to appeal to that audience would soon be added. Pitzer, a chemist, was instrumental in building up

the humanities and social sciences at Rice, making real the change from institute to university.

Continuing Studies offered its first class, on the low-temperature processing of petroleum products, in June 1968, with Thomas W. Leland of Rice's Department of Chemical Engineering as coordinator. Other instructors included two additional faculty from Rice's chemical engineering department, Riki Kobayashi and Gary Fisher, and two faculty members from other universities. The fee for the five-day course was \$300. Forty-six students enrolled.

This class was fairly typical of the Continuing Studies offerings for the next several years.

Despite rather rapid changes in

the leadership of Continuing Studies at this time, there was a great deal of continuity in the thinking behind the course offerings. Wischmeyer left Rice for a job at Bell Labs in the fall of 1968, Nat W. Krahl of the Department of Civil Engineering ran the office for about a year, and Sam H. Davis from the Department of Chemical Engineering took on the position in the fall of 1969.

The engineering school at Rice was, by design, the source of most of the Continuing Studies course ideas and instructors. These professors structured their classes around their own research projects, hoping for a market big enough to recover the cost of presenting the class.

LIMITED MARKET

This practice resulted in course offerings for professional engineers that were in keeping with the high intellectual standards of Rice University and that made the most current scholarship available. However, the notion that Continuing Studies would serve primarily the engineering and scientific communities severely limited the market that could be drawn on to recoup the program's expenses. And competition for this market was on the rise. Professional engineering and scientific organizations all offered continuing education programs of their own, and public universities offered courses that were often less expensive because they typically did not have to be self-supporting.

Adding to this difficulty was the

general economic slowdown in the Houston economy in the late 1960s that kept many corporations from sending employees to continuing education courses in large numbers. Further, maintaining the high quality of Continuing Studies classes required generous compensation for the faculty, many of whom were tenured professors reluctant to give up any time away from their own research to teach Continuing Studies courses.

FINANCIAL FACTORS

These problems began to lead to difficulties in meeting the requirement that OCS pay its own way. Deficits plagued the office almost from the beginning. Although these deficits were not large, by 1970 they set off a debate within Rice's administration about the future viability

of Continuing Studies.

The possibility of larger losses and increasing competition from other schools and professional organizations created opposition to continuing the program. At the same time, though, other factors weighed heavily in favor of persevering.

Dean of Engineering William E. Gordon, who was responsible for the administrative oversight of OCS, strongly recommended that the program be kept. He pointed out that the courses had been popular among the faculty who taught them, providing them with important opportunities to make contacts with people in industry and to earn money during the summer. More to the point, he argued, the courses had been very well received, had helped boost Rice's image in the Houston business com-

munity, and had brought many people onto the campus who had never been exposed to Rice before.

SHOW OF SUPPORT

Gordon skillfully made the point that Continuing Studies was simply too important to be measured primarily by its income-producing potential. These arguments carried the day, and President Norman Hackerman proved willing to cover losses for a while, giving the office a chance to feel its way through to a financial solution.

Rice had, after all, never tried anything quite like this before, and OCS, led by Sam Davis, was learning through experience how to make it work. The overhead was almost all salaries—70 to 80 percent of the office budget—and there was

really no way to reduce it. OCS thus focused on ways to increase course revenues, which meant getting more students enrolled.

Between 1968 and 1970, eight courses had been given, most of them covering at least direct expenses, but seven others were canceled due to low enrollments.

AD CAMPAIGNS

Davis began working to develop more effective advertising campaigns and to compile computer-generated mailing lists of those likely to be interested in taking courses. He also made a campus-wide request to Rice's faculty for new classes that might appeal to a broader audience.

In spite of these efforts, budget problems continued throughout the

early 1970s even as the quality of the courses remained impressive. The content of the courses was still almost entirely scientific and technical, with offerings in fields such as materials science, oil pollution, digital signal processing, concrete technology, and mathematical methods in engineering.

In 1970, in an effort to tap a different market, new courses were added to meet the ever more complex needs of business. Accordingly, that spring OCS added four courses in management to its schedule of engineering and scientific offerings, presenting two-day classes on "Computer-Aided Risk Analysis," "Computers and Banking Management," "New Developments in Project Management," and a five-day "Introduction to

Operations Research and the Management Sciences."

EXCELLENT REVIEWS

The people drawn to the Rice campus for both technical and business courses during the years from 1968 to 1972—between 150 and 200 each year—were almost uniformly happy with their experience. Their reviews of the courses were excellent, often containing extravagant praise of the university, its facilities, and the hospitality afforded them.

One participant in an OCS course soon enrolled as a full-time graduate student. Rice faculty and staff were also beginning to attend some courses, and the programming was gaining wider visibility in Houston as a whole.



Continuing Studies students receive training on an early personal computer.



Rice University history professor Gale Stokes leads a Continuing Studies class in Eastern European history.

INCLUDING THE HUMANITIES, 1973-1975

The first significant change in focus came to the Office of Continuing Studies in early 1973. When OCS director Sam Davis went on sabbatical, Malcolm R. MacPhail of Rice's Department of Electrical Engineering became head of the program.

MacPhail's tenure as director, which lasted only until the end of 1974, marked an important turning point in the history of Continuing Studies at Rice. MacPhail was trained as a physicist and worked both in industry and at Rice. He was an extremely cosmopolitan man with wide-ranging interests and avocations, the most

important being a love of different cultures and languages. In short, MacPhail was precisely the kind of person who could bridge the gap between the scientific and technical culture and the culture of the humanities and social sciences. Under his direction, the office began to diversify its course offerings into previously excluded areas, most notably the humani-

ties. Not science alone but the entire panoply of academic disciplines was seen as having a role to play "in the service of society."

By the 1974-75 academic year, OCS was offering a very different selection of courses than it had presented in the past, although the number of classes taught was about the same. Scientific and engineering courses did not disappear from

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EACH PARTICIPANT A DIFFERENT STORY

The variety of Continuing Studies participants over the years has added to the rich history of the school.

• NORTHERNER JOE BRAZZATTI CAME TO A "LIVING TEXAS" COURSE IN 1979 TO LEARN ABOUT HIS NEW HOME, BUT HE RETURNED YEAR AFTER YEAR TO CONTINUE A LIFELONG EDUCATION.

• JOE DAMON NEEDED A CREATIVE PURSUIT TO BALANCE OUT HIS WORK RUNNING A GAS COMPANY. HE DROVE 45 MILES TO RICE TO TAKE PHOTOGRAPHY COURSES THROUGH CONTINUING STUDIES AND TO PURSUE HIS DREAM OF PUBLISHING A BOOK ON THE VANISHING RURAL LIFE OF TEXAS.

• JEFF ABBOTT, AN AUSTIN COMPUTER COMPANY EMPLOYEE AND RICE GRADUATE, CAME TO THE FIRST CONTINUING STUDIES WRITERS' CONFERENCE IN 1992 AND WON THE

MANUSCRIPT CONTEST FOR BEST MYSTERY WRITING. HE HAS SINCE PUBLISHED THREE BEST-SELLING MYSTERY NOVELS.

• CHAILLE HUTCHESON, CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD OF THE HOUSTON CHILDREN'S MUSEUM IN 1989, WAS INTIMIDATED BY THE PROSPECT OF PUBLIC SPEAKING UNTIL SHE TOOK A CONTINUING STUDIES COURSE ON THE SUBJECT. SHE WENT ON TO LEAD A HIGHLY SUCCESSFUL CAPITAL CAMPAIGN FOR A NEW MUSEUM BUILDING.

• RETIREES HAZEL AND FORD BANKSTON "FOUND LIFE AFTER RETIREMENT," TRAVELING TO THE MANY PLACES THEY LEARNED ABOUT

THROUGH CONTINUING STUDIES, INCLUDING TURKEY, GREECE, EGYPT, NEPAL, AND SPAIN.

• JOAN AND JEFF JORDAN "WALTZED ACROSS TEXAS" WITH JOURNALIST RAY MILLER IN THE LATE 1970S AND LATER BECAME AVID CONTINUING STUDIES PARTICIPANTS. THEY RAN AN OFFICE SUPPLY BUSINESS DURING THE DAY AND TOOK CLASSES TOGETHER AT NIGHT.

• ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE STUDENTS COME FROM 40 COUNTRIES FROM AROUND THE WORLD. THEY HAVE INCLUDED AN INDONESIAN POP MUSIC RECORDING ARTIST, A BREAK DANCER FROM KAZAKHSTAN, AND MEMBERS OF MIDDLE EASTERN ROYAL FAMILIES.

the list of offerings, but their numbers were greatly reduced.

In fall 1974, for example, no engineering courses were taught by Continuing Studies. Rather, "Journalism for Business," "Introduction to Photography," "The Evolution of Christian Thought," and "Religious Biographies"—mainly subjects of general interest—were presented.

FIRST LANGUAGE CLASSES

Spring courses included "Digital Processing" and "The Properties of Stainless Steels," but again, most were courses that appealed to the general public. Notably, classes in conversational French, German, Portuguese, Spanish, and Russian were given for the first time. Each course met once

a week for 10 weeks. Rice faculty and staff were encouraged to attend at half-price.

MacPhail also tried to recruit more teachers, urging anyone interested in giving a class "primarily for the benefit of the public" to contact him. His strategy put the office on a firm financial footing for the first time.

These changes reflected a broader outlook on the purpose and goals of OCS at Rice, an outlook entirely congruent with Lovett's early remarks and suggested in Pitzer's first statements about the office.

John L. Margrave, dean of advanced studies and research, who had assumed administrative responsibility for OCS in 1972, explained this broader view in a

statement that recognized the need to expand the mission of the office.

RESPONSIBILITY TO PEOPLE

"We at Rice," Margrave wrote, "recognize the fact that private universities have a responsibility to the people of the State of Texas and to their respective communities the same as do the State-supported Universities . . . Our goal is to provide the facilities and interactions through which our citizens can become better qualified to carry out their various vocations as well as acquire interests and specializations which will enable them to make productive use of leisure time and of their years in later life and in retirement."



Houston National Bank president Ron Brown, left, helped promote "Interpreting America" in 1976, with Mary McIntire, Rice drama professor Sandy Havens, and Linda Driskill.

EXTENDING THE OUTREACH, 1975-1980

In July 1974, MacPhail and Dean Margrave brought in Dr. Linda P. Driskill, then teaching in the Department of English and the Jones School of Administration, to be assistant director, on a part-time basis, under MacPhail. MacPhail continued as director until his retirement in December of that year, and Driskill was named to the position.

Under Linda Driskill, OCS took major strides toward fulfilling the goals outlined by Margrave. Her creativity, energy, entrepreneurial spirit, and general sense of adventure would prove highly useful in making the office more sensitive to the demands of the marketplace.

Driskill would continue to emphasize diversification of OCS classes while maintaining at the same time a commitment to offering courses appropriate for a major university.

OUTSIDE EXPERTISE

Importantly, during the years of Driskill's directorship, OCS began to use its courses as a nexus, drawing on Rice's own faculty but also bringing in additional expertise and knowledge from industry, government, and other community organizations.

Characterized by tremendous energy and a strong *esprit de corps*, the small OCS staff in the mid-to late 1970s accomplished remarkable

things. Though not native Texans, they adopted the Texas "can do" attitude, not only designing classes and enrolling students but also raising outside funds, introducing speakers, and even running classroom projectors.

When Driskill became director of Continuing Studies in 1975, the office was housed on the third floor of Lovett Hall. Desks for the three staff members, five file cabinets, and two bookcases were packed into a single small office. A room in Fondren Library later accommodated one program coordinator and a secretary. As the program grew, space became a severe problem,

diverting a good deal of effort and energy into a nearly constant search for more room.

Contributing to the office's operating problems was the difficulty of assessing risk in the market for continuing education classes. The requirement that OCS be self-supporting left it far more exposed to the shifting state of Houston's economy than the rest of the university.

No funds were allocated for its operation from the university's budget, so it was expected to recoup all its costs, including employee wages, from course fees. The staff knew that failure to recover expenses would result in the cancellation of the entire program.

This rather stark reality tied OCS to the vagaries of the market in a

way that was unique at Rice. Demand for a college education is relatively inflexible. People send their children to a college such as Rice whether times are good or bad. Demand for continuing education classes, however, can vacillate depending on the health of the local economy, the world political situation, or a host of other factors over which OCS has no control.

Attendance at Continuing Studies courses, especially the arts and humanities classes, can be seen by many students as a luxury. In tough economic times, though, other sorts of classes can draw large enrollments. Those seeking jobs, or feeling threatened by a tightening job market, will invest in courses that might prove useful to potential employers.

SHIFTS IN MARKET

In response to this shifting demand, the OCS staff developed an experimental, nimble frame of mind. Trying to gauge what sorts of classes would appeal to a large enough public, though, was not easy and, above all, required experience. During the second half of the 1970s, the office would gain this experience, sometimes painfully and sometimes with great success.

During Driskill's tenure, OCS continued to put together scientific and technical courses, although the short-course market in these areas was increasingly dominated by the professional societies. Rice continued to offer about three such courses each semester, but these classes were risky. They were expensive to produce and

drew on a relatively small market.

The same was true of conferences on topics such as trade with Latin America and with China, which were timely and important but whose up-front expenses and complex logistics made their success difficult to predict. The staff discovered that adding more classes in languages and the humanities, which were less expensive and less complicated, and more appealing to the general public, provided some regular income, but the program was still very small and continued to struggle to recover its costs.

NEW CULTURAL PROGRAMS

The most significant new initiative for the office came in 1976, when the success of a course series that explored America's bicenten-

nial started OCS down a path of more broadly based cultural and historical programming. Its mass-market success and the high level of visibility it provided enabled Continuing Studies to find a wider audience for a range of courses on topics in the humanities as well as for its technical and business-related offerings.

The program, titled "Interpreting America," was conceived in 1975. It was a series of short courses that drew on the general interest in American history sparked by the hoopla surrounding the celebration of the country's bicentennial, and it was designed to lead people to a deeper and more meaningful understanding of the American experience.

The Office of Continuing Studies, however, had never before un-

dertaken a project of such logistical complexity, and it lacked the funding to carry it out. In the never-say-die manner that would characterize OCS for years to come, Linda Driskill and program director Dr. Mary McIntire set out to find outside support for the project.

BUSINESS SPONSORSHIP

In a round of visits to local businesses, they found an eager partner in the Houston National Bank (later RepublicBank). As a new entrant in the Houston banking scene, the bank was concerned primarily with getting its name known in the community, particularly the well-heeled downtown business community. This concern led to an unusually high level of creativity in their marketing strat-



CONTINUING STUDIES WAS INDIRECTLY RESPONSIBLE FOR LAUNCHING A HIT MOVIE. WHEN AN *ESQUIRE* MAGAZINE EDITOR SPOKE IN THE CONTINUING STUDIES PUBLISHING PROGRAM IN 1978, HE WAS TAKEN TO GILLEY'S NIGHTCLUB, AND HE LATER ASSIGNED AN ARTICLE FOR THE MAGAZINE ON THE "URBAN COWBOY" PHENOMENON. THE ARTICLE WAS THE BASIS FOR THE 1980 HIT MOVIE OF THE SAME NAME, STARRING JOHN TRAVOLTA AND DEBRA WINGER.

egies and, in particular, to a focus on the sorts of cultural events likely to appeal to their preferred demographic group.

Under its marketing head, Steve Gubitz, the bank had sponsored, for example, the popular Sidewalk Symphony, an outdoor free entertainment series, as well

as a project called "The Larger Canvas," in which Houston and Texas artists displayed specially commissioned works on freeway billboards.

Of more interest to Driskill and McIntire was the fact that the bank also had a history of supporting high-quality public television programs and would also support the upcoming historical series,

America, hosted by Alistair Cooke. In connection with its support of this series, the Houston National Bank agreed to underwrite Rice's "Interpreting America" courses. This financial assistance allowed the OCS to develop and effectively publicize the series of classes, bringing large numbers of students and much favorable publicity to Rice. "Interpreting America"

would become, in turn, a springboard for future successes.

"Interpreting America" was a year-long series of evening classes designed specifically to complement the television series, which was shown throughout 1976 on Houston's NBC affiliate, KPRC-TV. Students could choose from more than 20 minicourses offered on the Rice campus and at The Kinkaid School.

Instructors were prominent Rice professors, including Harold H. Hyman, Ira D. Gruber, and Frank E. Vandiver, and well-known, highly regarded speakers from institutions such as The Museum of Fine Arts, Houston. A committee of Rice faculty members advised OCS on course offerings. American religion, politics, science, and

art were all included.

The minicourses were planned with a broad general audience in mind. Families, friends, neighbors, and club members were urged to enroll together, and publicity for the program stressed that no special knowledge was necessary to get the full benefit of the courses. A discount of half off the already reasonable tuition of \$35 for three courses was offered to everyone over age 65 who enrolled.

APPEAL TO WIDE MARKET

The office had always advertised its offerings in the Houston press and in appropriate professional journals, but never before had it attempted to reach such a wide market with topics

of broad potential popularity. An intensive promotional campaign was a breakthrough in marketing for OCS as it expanded its vision of its potential audiences and how to reach them.

McIntire, who directed the bi-centennial program, proved to be a tireless speaker. She made presentations to some 20 social and civic organizations, ranging from the Sierra Club to the United Daughters of the Confederacy, and to business groups such as the Chamber of Commerce, the Rotary Club, and the Lion's Club. OCS offered corporate subscriptions to 17 large companies in the Houston area and generated interest in the program by distributing brochures and posters in the workplace.

McIntire also made organized efforts to reach churches, Houston public schools and private educational institutions, retirement communities, community centers, and library branches.

The office also conducted a direct mail campaign in support of the course series, with the Houston Symphony Society's membership list as a particularly successful major component. In addition, more than 40,000 Houston National Bank customers received program information with their monthly statements. Perhaps the most effective publicity, however, came from the three-minute commercials, featuring McIntire with program faculty, that ran during the "America" television series.

'LIVING TEXAS'

OCS was now determined to build on the success of the "Interpreting America" series. Linda Driskill and Mary McIntire took the next step with a successful proposal for an innovative series of courses, begun in 1978, that would explore Texas and its mystique.

The "Living Texas" series turned out to be a huge success and another major milestone in the history of Continuing Studies at Rice.

By the late 1970s, the city of Houston was riding high. The strength of its energy-based economy, coupled with hard times in other parts of the country, led to a flood tide of migration into Houston from the North and East. This growth, however, was not without

cost. The often-clashing attitudes and values of the migrants and an earlier generation of Houstonians developed into an ongoing debate about the future of the city and the state.

"Living Texas" was aimed at both new transplants and longtime residents and explored the region's past, present, and future.

Well-known local and regional historians, public figures, writers, and scientists spoke about historical and contemporary aspects of Texas life and culture. McIntire, the director of the program, drew on the expertise of community and professional organizations such as the American Institute of Architects and the Houston Geological Association for help in designing courses and enlisting speakers.

Class topics ranged widely. “Black Gold in Texas: Texas Oil,” for example, dealt with the discovery of oil and its role in giving the state a new wealth and prominence. The role of women in civilizing the frontier was explored in “Women in Texas.” In a course series called “Texas Wild,” geologists and biologists discussed the terrain of the state and regional contrasts in its flora and fauna. The state’s cooking, languages, crafts, politics, art, history—all were investigated by faculty and eager students.

PHENOMENAL RESPONSE

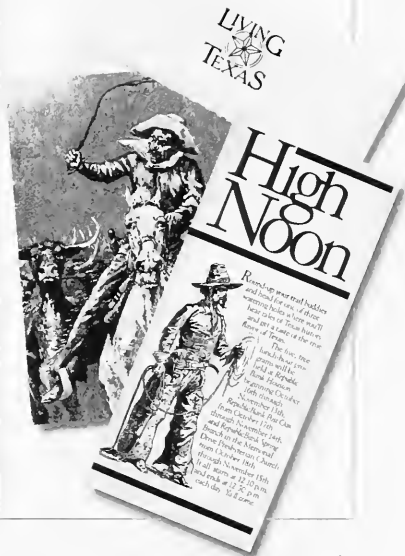
The community's response to this program was phenomenal. Corporate sponsorships were forthcoming, a gala in-store party was thrown by Neiman-Marcus, and enrollments

were large. Some Houston companies, most notably Texas Eastern Transmission and Conoco, used the "Living Texas" series as part of their orientation for employees new to the region. They sent hundreds, including some senior managers, to attend various courses. More than 50 companies agreed to publicize the series to their employees through company newsletters.

Articles about the program appeared in such publications as the *Los Angeles Times*, the *New York Times*, and *Newsweek*. The series appealed to the imaginations of people across the country, and especially within Houston. The program seemed to reflect the audacity and energy of Texas itself.

In her 1978 report to President Hackerman on the activities of OCS,

The "Living Texas" and "High Noon" series explored the state's culture and mystique and received national publicity.



Linda Driskill insightfully explained the importance of the "Living Texas" series and its place in the overall vision of Continuing Studies at Rice. "During the past few months," she wrote, "we have tried to demonstrate how the University can serve the community by providing unique educational opportunities that address significant emerging issues and problems, showing continuing education to be more than cake decorating and auto mechanics classes. The publicity we have received has portrayed Rice as a national leader in continuing studies, the kind of department the public expects from Rice."

This commitment to excellence in Continuing Studies offerings to the community dovetailed perfectly with Rice's overall mission and with

its strengths. Continuing education at Rice would draw on real scholarship and provide the highest levels of education to a community that increasingly desired it.

'HIGH NOON' LECTURES

The success of the "Living Texas" program led to several related projects. The "High Noon" lectures were designed to be accessible to downtown workers, presented over eight lunch hours in the auditorium of the library in downtown Houston. The "High Noon" lectures were similar in content to the longer "Living Texas" courses, covering topics like West Texas ghost towns, the Civil War west of the Mississippi, Houston history, and the image of the cowboy.

Also like the "Living Texas"

courses, these lectures were given by a mix of Rice faculty and prominent outside speakers, such as Joe B. Frantz of the Texas State Historical Association and Ray Miller from the popular *Eyes of Texas* television program.

Driskill's and McIntire's successes at fund raising allowed OCS to offer these "crash courses in Texas past and present" free of charge. Support for the series came from various local businesses and organizations, most prominently the Houston National Bank, the Houston Academy of Medicine, the Texas Medical Center, and the University of Texas-Houston Health Science Center. Better public relations for Rice could hardly be imagined.

Another popular related project was "Waltzing Across Texas." Be-

gun in 1983, again with the support of RepublicBank (formerly Houston National Bank), "Waltzing Across Texas" was essentially "High Noon" on the road. It consisted of a series of bus trips led by Ray Miller and University of Houston professor John Coffman, an expert on the geography, ethnic groups, and culture of Texas.

The trips were wildly successful, packing a tremendous amount of travel and information into three-day tours that visited a wide variety of historic sites throughout east, central, and west Texas, including, for example, the Alamo, Goliad, and Washington-on-the Brazos. One trip was a "waltz" to Big Bend.

Although the "Living Texas" program and its offshoots certainly garnered the most publicity for Rice

during the late 1970s and early 1980s, other course series were also very successful and demonstrated the same commitment to bringing expertise of the very highest caliber to the people of Houston.

A much greater variety of courses was now offered, including topics such as financial planning, science fiction literature, photography, and foreign trade opportunities, as well as a few technical courses and the increasingly important language courses.

LANGUAGE PROGRAMS

The Language Programs, with roots in Malcolm MacPhail's original language offerings in 1974, grew steadily throughout the 1970s and early 1980s. Offerings included instruction in eight foreign lan-

guages and intensive English as a Second Language classes. By 1977, it was flourishing enough to require its first full-time director, a position filled by Josephine Rodgers.

The Language Programs' focus was on integrating speaking, reading, and writing skills to meet the needs of business, academic, and travel communities. Courses were limited to eight persons to allow students to develop their conversational ability. A continuum of levels of instruction allowed students to be placed in groups with similar knowledge of the target language. By 1980, the Language Programs employed 27 teachers, including some graduate students from Rice's language departments.

A VARIETY, OF COURSE

A few of the lively and unique Continuing Studies general interest courses offered over the years

"CULTS AND BRAINWASHING"

"HOW THE BIBLE CAME TO BE 'THE WORD OF GOD'"

**"COMMUNICATION AND CULTURE: FROM THE ILIAD
TO THE INTERNET"**

**"THE PURSUIT OF HAPPINESS: A PHILOSOPHICAL AND
PSYCHOLOGICAL APPROACH"**

"INTERNATIONAL ESPIONAGE IN THE TWENTIETH CENTURY"

"FEMALE MADNESS IN LIFE AND LITERATURE"

"DICKENS AND FREUD"

"THE LOVE LIFE OF THE ATTWATER PRAIRIE CHICKEN"

"THE PLANET OF THE GRAPES"

"EXPLORERS, EXPLOITERS, AND ECCENTRICS OF TEXAS"

"THE BRAIN: GREY MATTERS"

"IS ANYBODY RUNNING METROPOLITAN HOUSTON?"

PUBLISHING PROGRAM

In 1978, Driskill and McIntire started the Rice University Publishing Program, a four-week summer course. This program, designed to teach the practical process of producing books and magazines, brought to campus some of the most powerful and prominent figures in the publishing industry from across the nation.

It was an immediate and unqualified success in the eyes of its students and in the eyes of the university as well. The value of having some of the best-known and most influential figures in the publishing industry speaking and visiting on campus was incalculable. The visibility of this effort, along with the exposure of such people to Rice,



contributed greatly to the high standing of the Continuing Studies program.

Some other programs, however, did not fare as well. Still in the process of learning how to produce consistent revenue, OCS sometimes miscalculated the appeal of a particular offering and sometimes was simply hit with bad luck.

In fall 1979, for example, the office had concentrated its efforts on a few high-impact courses with high up-front expenses, among them a conference on "Trade with

Brazil" and another on "Coal Liquefaction." When these courses had to be unexpectedly canceled or postponed, OCS found itself in severe financial difficulties.

NEW STRATEGIES

Forced to scramble to cover expenses by the end of the fiscal year, including the salaries of the staff recently hired after the success of "Interpreting America," Linda Driskill articulated a new strategy for developing course offerings, one that demonstrated a sophisticated understanding of the economics of adult education.

"We concluded," she wrote, "that changes had to be made in our program: courses should be lower in cost, address specific problems, and be of interest to a

large, identifiable local (rather than national) market. Further, the risk has to be spread among more courses in order to minimize the blow of the failure of any one course."

Following this basic plan and taking measures designed to increase the office's general efficiency, OCS did manage to break even by July 1980. There was some uncharacteristic unevenness in the quality of the programming that spring, but the way was paved for a more rational operational strategy, one that would lead to an efficient balance between expenses and income and to far more predictable income.



The Speros P. Martel Center for Continuing Studies opened in 1987.

GROWTH AND CONSOLIDATION, 1980-1998

By 1978, the rapidly mounting successes of OCS, led by "Interpreting America," brought a need for more staff to handle the creation and administration of a growing number of courses. When President Norman Hackerman authorized several new staff positions to ease this problem, the issue of office space shortage became even more intense.

In summer 1980, OCS was moved into space in the basement of Fondren Library large enough to house, although just barely, its newly expanded staff of 15. This space was far from ideal—divided into two sections separated by

stacks and difficult to reach for Houstonians who wanted to sign up for classes—but the immediate problem of inadequate office space was solved.

In 1981, when Linda Driskill went on leave from Rice, Mary McIntire was appointed acting director of OCS and exercised responsibility for the operation of the office. McIntire, who received her Ph.D. in English from Rice, had worked closely with Linda Driskill for the previous five years and shared her vision for the office as well as her understanding of how to successfully market Continuing Studies courses to the local community.

NEW DIRECTOR

When Driskill decided to return full-time to her academic responsibilities in 1982, McIntire was named the new director of the Office of Continuing Studies. She was the first director to devote full-time service to the post.

By the early 1980s, the office had changed greatly since the time Linda Driskill arrived in 1975. There had been a steady expansion in the number and variety of course offerings and in total enrollment. In 1975, the office held 10 to 15 courses annually, with approximately 200 total participants. By



In 1991, a section of the Berlin Wall was hoisted over the Media Center and placed in the courtyard between that building and the Continuing Studies Center.

1981, OCS offered 100 courses annually with 3,000 enrollments.

Judging from course evaluations, the vast majority of these people were very pleased with the programs they attended and were proud to have studied, even in noncredit classes, at Rice University. Courses ranged from highly technical classes for science and engineering professionals to an increasing number of offerings in the humanities.

As director, Mary McIntire continued to follow the strategy of minimizing exposure to risk while at the same time offering high-quality programming that would serve the community and increase Rice's stature. The keystone, thus, was careful advance planning.

Running many courses to dilute

the risk of failure became a necessity, but those classes all had to be carefully targeted to specific audiences, well-staffed, and of the best quality.

CHANGING NEEDS

Tapping into the Houston market as deeply as possible also became a top priority, and this required developing a real sensitivity to the changing needs of a wide spectrum of the city's population.

Close attention had to be given to publicity, with both breadth of media coverage and the appropriate targeting of advertising being of major importance. The active solicitation of outside funding and outside partners, particularly for courses that could be given on-site for businesses and other institutions, also required constant attention.

In the following years, the office closely followed these general guidelines and demonstrated both increasing professionalism and increasing success. In 1982, OCS took over the administration of Rice's Summer School, also a cost-recovery operation, in return for a fee from the university. This program offered 25 to 30 courses each summer, taught by Rice faculty, for college credit, primarily as a service to Rice undergraduates. OCS administered all aspects of the program, including course selection, faculty recruitment, registration, and scheduling.

The office also administered the university's Class III program, which allowed qualified postbaccalaureate students who were not in Rice's degree-granting programs to take lim-

ited undergraduate and graduate-level courses for credit. Many such students went on to enroll in regular graduate programs at Rice.

RICE AND THE COMMUNITY

It is a measure of the growth of OCS and its importance to the university that when a university-wide self-study began in 1983, the office, unmentioned in the previous such study in 1974, became the subject of serious discussion.

The self-study panel on community relations was adamant in its insistence that, with demographic changes dramatically reshaping the contours of Houston and Texas and with increased competition for the region's best students, Rice needed to intensify its efforts toward improving its relations with its com-

munity. The panel reaffirmed the role of OCS in aggressively and creatively promoting Rice's name and reputation as an asset to the local, and even national, community.

By 1983, when the self-study took place, OCS offered about 130 non-credit programs a year, including courses in eight foreign languages and several sessions of English as a Second Language to students from all over the world. About half of the general education courses were taught by Rice faculty. By 1985, enrollment was more than 5,500, with nearly half in the areas of humanities and social sciences.

The very rapid, very public success of Continuing Studies during the early 1980s placed all sorts of strains on what was still a very small staff. Without adequate university coordi-

A VERY SPECIAL INSTRUCTOR

IN 1998, CONTINUING STUDIES ESTABLISHED THE VENKATESH KULKARNI TEACHING PRIZE TO HONOR THOSE WHO DEMONSTRATE EXEMPLARY TEACHING AND HAVE MADE A SUSTAINED CONTRIBUTION TO THE SCHOOL OF CONTINUING STUDIES.

THE PRIZE IS NAMED FOR A BELOVED CONTINUING STUDIES NOVEL-WRITING TEACHER WHO DIED OF LEUKEMIA AT AGE 52 IN MAY 1998. A MEMBER OF THE CONTINUING STUDIES FACULTY FOR 12 YEARS, KULKARNI TAUGHT SEVERAL LEVELS OF NOVEL WRITING AND WAS THE FIRST RECIPIENT OF THE AWARD ONE MONTH BEFORE HIS DEATH.



Instructor Venkatesh Kulkarni with Assistant Dean Dr. Laura Hsu, left, and Dr. Lilly Chen

KULKARNI, A TEACHER OF EXTRAORDINARY INTELLECT AND DEDICATION, CREATED A UNIQUELY SUCCESSFUL NOVEL-WRITING PROGRAM AND SET A STANDARD OF EXCELLENCE. HIS STUDENTS WERE FERVENTLY LOYAL TO HIM. MANY CONTINUED TO COME TO HIS CLASSES AFTER MOVING AWAY FROM HOUSTON. ONE STUDENT FLEW IN FROM CHICAGO EACH WEEK FOR KULKARNI'S SATURDAY CLASS.

KULKARNI WAS THE AUTHOR OF ARTICLES, ESSAYS, POEMS, STORIES, AND THE AWARD-WINNING NOVEL *NAKED IN DECCAN*. KULKARNI WAS A GRADUATE OF OSMANIA UNIVERSITY IN INDIA AND STUDIED AT CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY, THE UNIVERSITY OF MOSCOW, THE UNIVERSITY OF HEIDELBERG, THE SORBONNE, AND TULANE UNIVERSITY.

nation of on-campus activities and room assignments, OCS encountered increasing difficulty finding sufficient classroom space.

The major problem confronting the office at this time, however, was again woefully inadequate space to house its offices. With an administrative and clerical staff of 15 crowded into 1,400 square feet in two different sections of the basement of Fondren Library, OCS was hampered in its ability to work efficiently with the public.

RENEWED COMMITMENT

When George Rupp was inaugurated as Rice's fifth president in October 1985, his address was characterized by a commitment to sustain and build on Rice's tradition of excellence in education. As Rupp

sketched out the broad outlines of the university's past and future, he described the role of the institution within the community.

"From the beginning," he noted, alluding to President Lovett's original vision, "our forebears have construed the aim of education here to include contributions to the broader society."

Rupp acknowledged the success of the Office of Continuing Studies, observing that it had more than 5,000 enrollments each year, more than the total in Rice's degree-granting programs. But he also acknowledged that too often the goal of service to the surrounding community was honored in the breach. This, he pledged, would change, and he vowed to "attend to opportunities to . . . expand this tradition."

During his tenure at Rice, President Rupp placed a good deal of importance on improving and expanding outreach to the community, with Continuing Studies as the major focal point of that effort. With his support and that of Provost Neal Lane, the next few years saw both a phenomenal growth in enrollment and a new variety and excellence in its programming.

FIRST DEAN

In 1986, Rupp recognized OCS director Mary McIntire's critical role in building the program and establishing it on a sound financial basis by appointing her the first dean of Continuing Studies, the only woman dean at Rice at that time. This important change acknowledged the academic worth

and validity of the program in the most visible way, boosting both the morale of its staff and the status of the program.

Another indication of Rupp's support was his promise to allocate new, larger accommodations for OCS. Those accommodations turned out to be the former Rice Museum on the edge of campus. The building had housed Dominique de Menil's art collection since 1968, but that collection was about to move into its newly completed home on Sul Ross Street.

In 1987, renovation began on the structure, with money coming from Rice and from a fund-raising drive conducted by OCS. Of critical importance was the support of Speros P. Martel with the

indispensable assistance of Rice trustee Ralph S. O'Connor.

NEW FACILITY

The 12,000-square foot facility, named the Speros P. Martel Center for Continuing Studies, opened in November 1987. Containing four lecture rooms, 10 language classrooms, and space for administrative offices, this new facility contributed significantly to the ability of the office to reach out to the Houston community.

With the easing of space constraints, OCS could continue to enlarge its offerings and improve existing services to a wide cross-section of the community. Further, the provision of classroom space within the Martel Center itself helped free OCS, at least to some degree, from

the difficulties of trying to obtain reliable room assignments for its courses. This was especially important for the daytime English as a Second Language courses.

The late 1980s saw continued growth in the number and variety of Continuing Studies course offerings. Dean McIntire, along with two program directors, designed a wide array of innovative courses in the arts, sciences, and humanities as well as in financial, technical, and professional programs. Many of these courses were cosponsored by Houston arts institutions and professional organizations.

At the same time, the office's strategies for reaching out to the community became more effective, as a two-person professional staff

devoted to marketing and publicity brought information about OCS to the public.

RECORD ENROLLMENTS

By the end of the decade, Continuing Studies had become the success that its founders envisioned. In 1990, enrollment totaled almost 9,300. The program offered 190 courses, 60 of which were offered for the first time, in addition to a full curriculum of language courses. The Language Programs enrolled more than 1,600 students, the highest number ever.

In July 1990, Continuing Studies completed its 16th straight year in the black. A substantial amount of its revenue was returned to the university in the form of faculty and staff salaries and honoraria as well as monies paid to graduate-

student instructors in the Language Programs and to undergraduate office assistants. Through its budget surplus, it also helped pay for audiovisual improvements on campus and began to fund Community Action Grants through the

grams, Dr. Laura Hsu and Edie Carlson-Abbey, were named assistant deans, which helped free Dean McIntire to become more involved with the university's broader plans for community relations.

The 1990s was a decade of both

**"FROM THE BEGINNING, OUR FOREBEARS HAVE CON-
STRUED THE AIM OF EDUCATION HERE TO INCLUDE
CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE BROADER SOCIETY."**

— GEORGE RUPP, RICE UNIVERSITY PRESIDENT, 1985-1993

university's Standing Committee on Community Affairs.

In 1991, the continuing importance of the Language Programs was acknowledged when its head since 1986, Dr. Kathleen Sayers, was made an associate dean. At the same time, two directors of pro-

expansion and growing community impact. Thousands of people who would otherwise have had no contact with the university benefited from Continuing Studies course offerings, and Rice developed a new image as an important asset to its community.



At Continuing Studies' 25th anniversary gala were Rice University trustee Ralph O'Connor, Dean Mary McIntire, Rice president George Rupp, and Nancy Rupp.

NAMED A SCHOOL

Rice's leadership officially recognized the importance of these contributions in 1992 when President Rupp raised the status of Continuing Studies from an office to a school. This change was a testament to Continuing Studies' active intellectual involvement with its surrounding community and an acknowledgment of the extremely high quality of the programs developed and offered by the office's staff. The change also represented a public renewal of the university's commitment to Continuing Studies.

In 1992, enrollment in Continuing Studies reached 10,000 annually—a number it held through the decade. Approximately 200 classes, in addition to a full complement of language

classes at many levels, were offered each year in three main sessions and a summer session. By this time, SCS had developed a strong core of courses, many taught by Rice faculty, that formed the heart of the program.

The school also continued to attract a fairly large number of "repeat customers"—participants who returned again and again to take advantage of the diverse and lively class offerings—many of whom came to broaden their education in the arts and humanities.

In the 1990s, Rice offered the state's most extensive noncredit program of history, literature, foreign language, international affairs, and religious studies courses, all contributing to a deeper understanding of culture and world affairs.

Many courses remained rooted in

the Houston community, cosponsored by local institutions such as The Museum of Fine Arts, Houston; Houston Symphony; Houston Grand Opera; Houston Ballet; and the Asia Society.

INTERNATIONAL SCOPE

Other courses were national and international in scope, reaching beyond Houston to bring understanding and insights to those who live here. For example, in 1990, several popular courses provided background to the Economic Summit of Industrialized Nations held at Rice that year. Another course explained the workings of the Republican National Convention held in Houston in August 1992. And the English as a Second Language program enrolled young people



*Instructor Sam Havens and aspiring writers
at the Rice University Writers' Conference*

from all over the world who came to Rice to study English before attending colleges throughout the United States.

Continuing Studies also has provided courses designed to meet the more practical needs of the greater community. Offerings have in-

cluded career development, creative writing, and fundraising courses; financial planning and investment courses; and courses in studio art, home design, gardening, and wines.

A two-day Writers' Conference featuring national speakers that drew aspiring writers from throughout the region was offered from 1992 to 1997.

NEW PRESIDENT

When Malcolm Gillis arrived on campus as Rice's sixth president in 1993, he used his inaugural address to reexamine the university's ide-

als and its role in society and to redefine its mission in ways that were consistent with both its founding principles and the changing world.

By the 1990s, the pace of change, which had troubled the founders of Continuing Studies in 1967, had increased to previously unimaginable levels. Gillis described rapid, sometimes bewildering worldwide changes, such as the revolutions in electronics, information technology, and molecular science; major demographic shifts; the globalization of the economy; and geopolitical realignments. These rapid changes, he argued, required that Rice's legacy of excellence in teaching and scholarship be put in the service of society in new and innovative ways.

LIFELONG LEARNING

Echoing the reasoning of those who had developed and guided Continuing Studies since its inception in the late 1960s, though with a new sense of urgency, Gillis argued that a critical part of Rice's response to the fundamental transformations taking place across the globe was a strong emphasis on lifelong learning. He described Continuing Studies as part of a continuum, in which Rice could use its talents and resources to reach out to people in its community from elementary school through old age.

Under President Gillis, Continuing Studies gradually took on a more professional and more national outlook. Though for many years considered a leader in state and re-

gional continuing education, SCS gained new status among university continuing education divisions across the country. Staff members served on national professional committees and on accreditation teams and gave presentations and keynote talks at national meetings. Increasingly, the Rice program gained a national reputation among other professionals in the field as a high quality, highly successful noncredit program.

With the impetus and encouragement of President Gillis and Provost David Auston, the SCS staff began a more professional and systematic approach to long-term planning. Beginning in 1993, staffers developed new marketing strategies and tracking methods, a sophisticated customer database, and new

programs targeting specific professional markets. They also developed a new cluster of collaborative agreements with professional societies and corporations that allowed them to serve new markets with reduced risk. At the same time, improved office efficiency, the use of the latest technology, and a team approach to supporting programs allowed the school to undertake increasingly ambitious programs with a minimal increase in staff and expenses.

PROFESSIONAL PROGRAMS

A result of this planning has been a revisiting of the original conception of Continuing Studies advanced by President Pitzer and Carl Wischmeyer in 1967. After 1993, SCS programming shifted toward more specialized technical course of-

ferings that provide training for new or rapidly changing professions.

Many of these courses involve collaboration with external institutions, and some are highly visible in both the local and national communities. "Advances in Tissue Engineering," begun in 1993, has been cosponsored by Rice's Institute of Biosciences and Bioengineering (IBB). This annual event has drawn national and international participants as well as Rice graduate students and many medical students to a week-long forum of ideas in this important and rapidly changing field. In 1997, this program was featured in a *USA Today* article that ranked IBB as a leader in tissue engineering research in the United States.

The Rice University Advanced Placement Institute, first offered in 1995 and cosponsored by the College Board, provides training to high school and middle school teachers who teach AP and pre-AP courses in a wide variety of subjects. The AP Institute brought more than 1,000 teachers from around the country to the Rice campus in 1998, showcasing the university to the teachers of the nation's best students and, at the same time, helping them become more effective teachers.

Another specialized collaborative effort is the professional development program in human resource management. This program was established in 1996 in cooperation with the Houston Human Resource Management

Association and the national Society for Human Resource Management. Designed to help students prepare for national accrediting examinations, this course also strengthens ties between Rice and the business community. By 1998, the program was preparing the largest number of certified human resource professionals in the greater Houston area.

COMPUTER TRAINING

The Rice Technology Education Center, a 1997 addition to the Continuing Studies program, provides advanced computer training leading to certification by major software providers. Offered in conjunction with a nationally ranked technical training firm, these courses help stu-

dents develop highly marketable skills and prepare for certification exams that qualify them to install, configure, support, and maintain information systems for businesses.

By 1998, 25 staff members were involved in all aspects of the Continuing Studies program, representing Rice University to the general public. SCS staff members handled with skill the detailed work involved in publicity, customer service, enrollment administration, and behind-the-scenes logistics of presenting more than 200 classes each year. The importance of the school's communication and marketing function was underscored in 1998 when Janelle Dupont, formerly director of marketing, was named assistant dean and director of communications.

BY THE NUMBERS

Approximate Continuing Studies enrollments over the years

SCHOOL OF CONTINUING STUDIES, 1968-1998: 154,250

FOREIGN LANGUAGE PROGRAM, 1974-1998: 11,125

ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE, 1978-1998: 11,160

"LIVING TEXAS" COURSES, 1977-1980: 5,000

RICE UNIVERSITY PUBLISHING PROGRAM, 1978-1997: 800

CREATIVE WRITING COURSES, 1986-1998: 15,000

THE ART OF FUND RAISING, 1987-1998: 1,275

ADVANCED PLACEMENT TEACHER INSTITUTES, 1995-1998: 2,560

HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT, 1996-1998: 400



Rice professor Antonios G. Mikos, scientific director of the "Advances in Tissue Engineering" program, discusses the topic with a course participant.

THIRTY YEARS OF CONTINUING STUDIES AT RICE

Continuing Studies in 1998 marked the 30th anniversary of its first course offering. While much has changed, the main emphasis of Continuing Studies continues to be the provision of high-quality educational opportunities to a changing community and the creation of an ongoing and robust interaction between Rice and that community.

Since the founding of the Office of Continuing Studies in 1967, Rice's presidents have all affirmed the wisdom of President Lovett's original vision of a university in vital contact with its community and have been convinced of the key role of Continuing Studies at the forefront of that contact.

Over the years, Continuing Studies at Rice has ably served the needs of the people of Houston, responding flexibly to changing realities, extending the traditional boundaries of educational enterprise, and reaching out with a genuine respect for the learning that Rice has to offer and for the individual men and women who come seeking this learning.

The work of Continuing Studies has helped create over time a fundamental shift in the university's perception of itself and the city's perception of the university—from a rather aloof institution to one much more closely in touch with the needs and strengths of its neighbors. This

work could never have taken place without the ongoing support of Rice faculty who taught in the programs



Rice University president Malcolm Gillis speaks at the Continuing Studies 30th anniversary reception.



Geographer Jeffrey Roet teaches a Continuing Studies course on geopolitics.

and the presidents and provosts who have provided guidance and support.

In 1997, an external review team examined the school's mission, quality, and the possibilities for its growth and development. Its report praised SCS for the high quality and broad scope of its offerings, for its financial success, and for ably fulfilling its mission of extending Rice's influence into the broader community and generating goodwill for the university.

Looking forward, the review team saw myriad opportunities for SCS both to assume a more central role within the university and to further expand its national and international presence. In particular, the reviewers noted the potential of SCS to develop credit offerings and, possibly, a program of distance learning. This kind of major expansion,

they noted, must have the strong support of the entire university community.

Obstacles to growth cited in the report are the inability to expand either office space or classroom space, despite rising expenses and staffing needs. Even though resources are strained by the school's success, the continued support of the university seems assured.

In 1997, Rice's Board of Trustees adopted a strategic plan for the growth of the university that included the goal of increasing Rice's "involvement and presence in local, national, and international communities in ways that both contribute to the common good and increase the recognition of the university." The plan specifically calls for integrating the School of Continuing

Studies "more clearly into the orbit of Rice's broader academic mission." This aspiration promises an important and central role for the school in the 21st century.

FEED
YOUR
MIND



SCHOOL OF
Continuing
STUDIES

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Historian Melissa Kean received her Ph.D. in history from Rice University and an M.A. in history from Creighton University. Her research has been in the history of higher education.

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ADVISORY COMMITTEE

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Steve Shaper*

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